

And the nominees are...

HEROES 2008



It's that time of year again. Time to honour your heroes, celebrate their contributions and salute our strengths as a community.

After hours of tallying your nominations and conferring with our new Community Panel of judges, Xtra West is proud to present the three finalists in each category.

But first a note on this year's inaugural community judging panel. In the past, the Xtra West Heroes team has tabulated the community's votes on its own and picked the winners in each category accordingly. This year, we wanted to bring more commu-

nity voices into the actual tabulation and selection stage. So we created a Community Panel of judges, invited some key people to join, added two Xtra West staff to the mix, ordered pizza and rolled up our sleeves.

This year's community judges are: Drew Dennis (executive director of Out on Screen), Janine Fuller (manager of Little Sister's), Michael Harris (freelance writer and Writer of the Year in 2006), Spencer Herbert (queer parks board commissioner), Michael V Smith (author, performance artist and last year's Community Hero of the Year), Mark Kowalk (community relations at Xtra West) and myself.

Michael V submitted his picks by email; everyone else met on Apr 4 and got one vote per category (except for Mark who abstained to preempt potential ties and ensure that Xtra West didn't dominate the proceedings.)

Four and a half hours and only minimal bickering later, we had our list of finalists. They are all Heroes in our eyes.

Winners will be announced at this year's Xtra West Community Achievement Awards on Sun May 11 at The Majestic Lounge on Davie St. Doors open at 5 pm, show starts at 6 pm. Tickets are just \$5 at the door.

Please join us as we honour all our Heroes of 2007.

And the nominees are...

Business Citizen of the Year

The Majestic Lounge for seizing the opportunity to take over an old Village venue and turn it into a new gay space, complete with regular drag nights and community fundraisers.



JONATHAN PHOTO

Rhizome for continuing to open its unique and cozy space to the queer community, for the countless

queer gatherings, games nights and fundraisers that owners Lisa Moore and Vinetta Lenavat regularly host, and for creating a space where different communities can come together to forge new connections.



JONATHAN LEE PHOTO

Vancity for supporting alternative families and living arrangements through its new alternative mortgage program (and its public ad campaign). And for years of supporting the gay community through its explicitly gay-positive ad campaigns and community sponsorship programs.

HONOURING OUR HEROES

Xtra West's 2008 Community Achievement Award winners

TALLULAH PHOTOS

HEROES 2008

Robin Perelle

bY ALL ACCOUNTS, IT WAS THE BEST HEROES ever, and I'm not just saying that.

The 2008 Xtra West Community Achievement Awards drew a full house to the Majestic Lounge May 11, for an energetic evening of fun, diverse performances and powerful speeches.

Readers cast their ballots in March to nominate their community heroes and recognize their contributions. Our inaugural community judging panel then poured over the nominations, shortlisted the finalists and selected the winners in each category, guided by the community's votes and our own fierce debates. (Okay, maybe not so fierce. But there were certainly vigorous discussions over pizza.)

In the end, 11 trophies (plus a special one to honour Jane Rule's eternal flame) were engraved and 11 heroes called to the stage to accept our community's thanks.

I would like to thank the members of the community judging panel for the time, energy and commitment they invested in this year's celebration. Their contributions confirmed the importance and benefits of reaching outside our usual spheres to work together to honour community. Thank you Drew Dennis, Janine Fuller, Spencer Herbert, Michael Harris and Michael V Smith.

Now here are some excerpts from what your Heroes had to say:



Business Citizen of the Year

RHIZOME

We're so honoured that we were nominated again this year. I'd just like to thank the incredible and talented people that work at Rhizome, and the many of you that give constant support and encouragement and love that make Rhizome a beautiful place for us all to be.

It's two years ago that we were envisioning this place that we thought would be a community space and a space to support social justice work. And in the two years we've been open, so many of you have contributed your talent and your passion and your anger and your dignity and your art. Elders and youth and people involved in so many different struggles that are part of our queer communities and our justice communities.

So thank you for that. It's more than we ever could have dreamed it would be.

XTRA West MAY 22, 2008